

CHIEF PROBATION OFFICERS

Fresno - 1915



Fresno County Courthouse - 1966



Fresno County Courthouse - Present



**Present and Past Fresno County
Chief Probation Officers**



Fresno County's Original Courthouse - Built 1866

Fresno County Chief Probation Officers

H. A. Sessions (1909-1921)



Mr. Sessions was instrumental in the organization of the Juvenile Court in 1904, serving as its officer without pay until 1911, when he was appointed on a salary. The Parental Home was built under his supervision, and after its completion, he was given charge of it. The detention house was built according to Sessions' plans and designs.

Some 500 were on record each year. Of this number about 100 dealt with adult and 400 with juveniles.

O.M. Akers (1921-1941)



C.A. "Jack" Tarr (1941-1944)



C.A. "Jack" Tarr served as Probation Officer starting February 25, 1941 until his death of an apparent heart attack, on August 31, 1944 at the age of 48. He was appointed to that post after having served as undersheriff in 1931.

Tarr was a member of the Los Angeles Police Department from 1914 to 1918. He farmed for a time after coming to Fresno, and then was employed as an engineer for the power company.

Tarr went from a position with the San Joaquin Light and Power Corporation to the undersheriff's post in 1931. He was then appointed as the Probation Officer by the four Superior Court Judges when Oliver M. Akers resigned the post.

John M. Ashjian (1944-1955)



John M. Ashjian joined the Probation Department August 1, 1941. Before coming to the Probation Department he was a deputy county clerk serving as clerk for Superior Court Judge T.R. Thompson and in that position was clerk for the Juvenile Court. He succeeded Chief Probation Officer C.A. Tarr who passed away from a heart attack on August 31, 1944.

Ashjian was the vice president of the California Probation and Parole Association from the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valley districts in 1950. He spent the last few years as Chief Probation Officer devoting much of his time working on plans for Juvenile Hall.

He was intensely interested in the youth of Fresno and for the last two years managed the Little League baseball team for the North Fresno Lions Club. He was a member of the board of directors of the Young Men's Christian Association and was active in the Boy Scout movement.

John Ashjian passed away while still in office from a heart attack December 10, 1955 at the age of 44.

L.B. Stagner (1955-1967)



Mr. Stagner began his career in the Fresno County Probation Department in July 1942, when he was assigned to work in the adult division. He was named Chief Probation Officer in December 1955, succeeding the late John Ashjian.

During Stagner's term as Chief Probation Officer of Fresno County, he supervised 107 staff, plus 39 juvenile hall staff. Another 20 staff members were added in 1967 to work in the Youth Treatment Center, which opened at Juvenile Hall in July 1967.

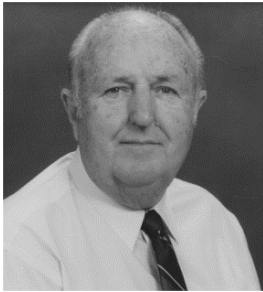
As Chief Probation Officer, Stagner instituted programs such as the intensified supervision program in which Deputy Probation Officers worked with small caseloads of seriously disturbed minors.

Lloyd B. Stagner passed away on December 13, 1975, after a short-term illness.

Frank L. Bailey (1967-1971)

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James Rowland (1972-1978)



Jim Rowland had a very distinguished career in California corrections. Prior to his appointment as Chief Probation Officer of Fresno County in 1972, he was an administrator in the California Department of Youth Authority and had served as Chief Probation Officer in Kings County. While Chief of Fresno County he was instrumental in creating the “Victim’s Impact Statement”, as part of the Probation Officers report to the court. The California Legislature followed the leadership of Mr. Rowland in crafting legislation that resulted in Victim/Witness services statewide.

Jim was appointed by Governor Deukmajian in 1978 to head the Youth Authority. A few years later the Governor appointed him to head the California Department of Corrections. Under his administration the state built several new prisons including the internationally known model of “Pelican Bay”.

He served as the State President of the California Probation, Parole and Correctional Association and was elected as the President of the Chief Probation Officers of California. Because of his appointment to State Service he had to relinquish that honor before being installed.

In recent years, Mr. Rowland was appointed as the Director of Corrections for the country of Malta. Upon his return to the United States, he was appointed as Chief Probation Officer of Napa County.

In addition to the above accomplishments, he has been instrumental in providing leadership for the concept of restorative justice in California probation departments.

Don Hogner (1980-1987)



After graduating from Fresno State University with a bachelor’s degree in philosophy, Don Hogner took his first job with Fresno County Probation as a municipal court investigator. His intention was to save up money in order to continue his education, but Don Hogner fell in love with his job.

Don Hogner had a reputation for being a “straight arrow” and a team player. He would fight hard for what he believed in but would always work with everyone to do what was best for the county. Hogner said, “...In probation, you need the courage to be independent and not to be influenced by the prosecution or the defense. You have to be concerned about public safety and motivated by the belief that people can change.”

Mr. Hogner became the Chief Probation Officer in 1980 and he guided the Fresno County Probation Department until September 5, 1987 when he resigned to accept the top administrator’s position at the Alameda County Probation Department. Upon Mr. Hogner’s departure he was responsible for 323 probation employees and controlled a budget of \$12.8 million.

His leadership oversaw the creation of innovative programs like the Adult Offender Work Program and the expansion of Work Furlough and diversion programs. Mr. Hogner was a great advocate of early intervention. He believed that, “...we need to invest our greatest energy in our children. The earlier we can get to them and the earlier we can do some things for them, the greater our likelihood of stopping further contact with the criminal justice system.”

Verne L. Speirs (1989-1995)



Verne L. Speirs was appointed the post as Fresno County Chief Probation Officer in January of 1989, where he was unanimously chosen by a panel of county Superior Court judges. Speirs came to Fresno leaving behind an administrative position for the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention for the Department of Justice in Washington DC. Before going to Washington, he also worked as assistant project director for the State Board of Corrections, and as institutional supervisor for the Sacramento County Probation Department.

During his tenure as Chief Probation Officer, he made several breakthroughs for Fresno County, including the original grant award to build the boot camp, probation officers on school campuses, the first armed probation officers in the Narcotics Enforcement Team and a comprehensive criminal justice needs assessment for Fresno County.

Speirs accepted a position as Sacramento County's Chief Probation Officer in 1995. "He's seen it through," said Lawrence O'Neil presiding Judge of Fresno County Superior Court. "He's been someone who's been steady through the storms, and that's very important to have someone like that. In the criminal justice system, rarely do issues creep in. They come with thunder".

Larry R. Price (1995-Present)



Appointed by the Superior Court Judges in December of 1995

Chief Price came to Fresno County after serving eight years as the Chief Probation Officer of Tulare County. Prior to that time, he was employed by the Kern County Probation Department for 18 years where he promoted through the ranks from Deputy Probation Officer to Division Director.

Chief Price holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Criminology and a Masters in Public Administration. He was the State President of the California Probation, Parole and Correctional Association in 1989. He was elected to serve as the President of the Chief Probation Officers of California beginning July 1, 2002. Chief Price began his career in Criminal Justice as a police officer in the City of Fullerton, California.

His philosophy in administrating the Fresno County Probation Department has included a commitment to prevention, early intervention, community-based supervision and incarceration with treatment, as a balanced model.

During his tenure the annual budget grew from 23 million to 50 million dollars with permanent staff growing from 391 to 573.

Chief Price expressed that many exciting things happened during his administration. Among those that he highlighted included the establishment of the Elkhorn Correctional Facility, the master planning and construction of a new Juvenile Justice Campus, the Adult and Juvenile Drug Courts, the establishment of the Forward Bound Academy and the Day Reporting Center, a major fiscal commitment to primary Prevention Services to at risk children in grades 4 through 8 and the implementation of the Juvenile Correctional Officer job classification.